GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HOME AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3634
ANSWERED ON:19.08.2003
CBI RAIDS ON FREEDOM FIGHTER PENSION DEPARTMENT
CHANDRA NATH SINGH;NIVEDITA MANE

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Bureau of Investigation had recently raided the Freedom Fighters` Pension Department of the Home Ministry;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of the persons arrested in this regard;

(d) whether the cases of getting pension sanctioned on the basis of forged signatures have come to the notice of the C.B.I.;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the steps taken by the Government to check the recurrence of such incidents?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SWAMI CHINMAYANAND)

(a)to(c): No raid on the Freedom Fighters Division of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) was conducted by CBI. However, on specific complaint passed on to CBI by MHA that two staff members of Freedom Fighters Division of MHA had demanded bribe for clearing a pension case of a freedom fighter, CBI had laid a trap to nab them red-handed. One of them, Shri Harbhajan Dass, Assistant, was caught red-handed on 25.07.2003 while the other, Shri Vijay Pal Singh, UDC, is absconding. A case has been registered against these officials under the relevant provisions of the IPC/Prevention of Corruption Act.

(d)&(e): On receipt of a Pension Payment Order (PPO) issued by Pay & Account Office (PAO), Ministry of Home Affairs, it was noticed that no sanction order in that case had been issued by the Freedom Fighters Division of MHA. On further departmental investigations, it transpired that in approximately 60 cases, all belonging to the State of Punjab, Pay & Accounts Office of MHA, had issued PPOs on the strength of sanctions purported to have been issued under the signature of an officer in the Freedom Fighter Division of MHA. On a complaint filed by MHA, CBI has registered a case RC.3(S)/2003 dated 04.07.2003 under the relevant provisions of the IPC and is investigating the matter.

(f): Several steps such as (i) transfer of officials of doubtful integrity, (ii) monitoring and regulating meeting of visitors with officers in Freedom Fighters Division, (iii) minimizing the number of officers in the Division authorized to sign pension sanction letters, (iv) putting in place a system of monthly reconciliation of pension sanction cases by Freedom Fighters Division and Pay & Accounts Office of this Ministry have been taken to prevent recurrence of such incidents.